

Laszlo A. Belady

Austin, TX.

Laszlo (Les) Belady passed away on Saturday, November 6 after battling dementia. He was 93 years old and is survived by his wife of 62 years Gizella, son Christian, daughter Petra and his four grandchildren. His life spanned six countries on three continents, and he experienced utter despair in World War II and the Hungarian revolution followed by the euphoria of immigrating to the country he called 'Paradise' in the 1960s. He came to the country with nothing and through hard work retired three times as an executive with first IBM, then as a VP with Microelectronics Computer Corporation and then founder and CEO of Mitsubishi Research labs. He definitely led a fulfilled life...truly lived the American Dream.

Laszlo was born on April 29, 1928 in Budapest, Hungary. He was always fascinated by his father's compass and slide rule and therefore attended the Technical University of Budapest, where he studied aeronautical engineering. In 1956 during the Hungarian revolution, he escaped Hungary and trekked 30 miles to the Austrian border with only the dream to go to America. At the Austrian border, he met his future wife Gizella, who had similarly left Hungary. He worked as a translator, being able to speak German, Hungarian and English. He settled in Cologne, Germany where he married Gizella and worked at Ford motor company. One of his first patents was for mechanical antilock brakes which were unheard of in the late 50s but certainly standard in all modern vehicles today. However, he missed his true love...airplanes. As a result, he moved to Paris to work at Dassault where he first dabbled with software (a nascent field). He also loved opera and jazz music, but could only listen to jazz secretly on the Europe free radio during World War II. So, after his exposure to American soldiers, he could not resist the pull of the United States of America and what it represented. He craved freedom and the opportunity for a better life and immigrated to the US in 1961 with his wife and infant son. After sending out more than 100 resumes he received three responses - one of which was IBM research in Yorktown, NY where they were hiring any engineer (even aeronautical) who had an interest in software and computer architecture. He did groundbreaking work in software technology and computer architecture and wrote a paper on virtual memory that was recognized as the most referenced technical paper in the 80s. To this day some consider him the father of virtual memory and his work is still taught in universities today.

Laszlo was a great role model for us all. Time and time again he led his life always thinking about and actively working toward the future and envisioning how we should progress as a



society. If there was a barrier he would find a way around it. This drove his sabbaticals at IBM. He believed in working on Graphics research and when unsupported by IBM he took a sabbatical to teach that at UC Berkeley. Similarly he returned to working with his colleague and friend Professor Manny Lehman who became a lifelong friend. They came from very different backgrounds and belief systems, but their mutual admiration and respect for each other was a beautiful lesson to his children in kindness, love and tolerance/open mindedness. In fact, Laszlo moved his family to London to extend his work with Manny at Imperial College.

Laszlo not only embraced change but he made change happen. He always took jobs that could make a major impact. He spent several summer vacations consulting overseas in Singapore and worked on various occasions in Austria. When he was 50 he was asked to lead IBMs world wide corporate strategy for software....from there he moved to Tokyo to start IBM Software research center in Tokyo and lived there for two years. During this period he was heavily recruited by major software universities and thus decide to retire from IBM and accepted an endowed chair at Georgia Tech to pursue teaching at age 56. However, shortly after he was pursued by Admiral Bobby Inman to lead the software program of a new research consortium in Austin called MCC, a company to compete against Japanese investments in software research. This is what ultimately brought him to his beloved Texas which would be his primary home for almost 40 years (living in Texas longer than anywhere else). He loved working for Admiral Inman and was for awhile at peace with the progress they were making, but after the departure of "Bobby" he was ready to move on. So he took the role as CEO of Mitsubishi Electronics Research Laboratories in Boston and Santa Clara to grow another software research program. He was a global builder for software research, first for IBM (in Japan for an American Company), then MCC (in Austin for American companies) and finally MERL (in America for a Japanese company). His third and final retirement from his visionary work was at age 70. During his retirement in his seventies, he spent more time in his home country of Hungary and utilized his network in helping companies there (and in other Eastern block countries) to connect with western companies. This was his calling in his final years....to help others. For all his past and recent contributions, he was inducted into the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in Budapest. He truly had a fantastic career impacting so many people in a positive way.

Throughout his life, he treasured beautiful music and exploring the world. He traveled extensively with his family and spent summers camping, swimming, and running by the beach. He believed in freedom and always being true to yourself. His legacy of honesty and commitment lives on through his beloved children/family.

He was "Nagy papa" to his grandchildren, who shared these thoughts:

Cailey- Attending the University of Texas at Austin, I was lucky enough for to spend a lot of time with my grandparents. Nothing made me happier than seeing my Nagypapa's eyes light up when I came to say hello. I relished visits with him, where we would take long walks around the neighborhood, oftentimes him sharing stories of his childhood, his interests, and his travels. I was in awe of how one person could hold so much knowledge, and I tried to soak up as much as I could. To me, he was so much more than a grandfather. He was my motivator, my supporter, my lifeguard, and my best friend. He left a lasting impact on everyone he met, and I am forever grateful to have been one of those people. I am truly a better person today because of the moments I shared with him.

Zoltan- Nagypapa understood my love for aviation from a young age and would always give as much information as he could. Whether that was giving me unique books to study or talking to me about flight. We also both had an obsession with maps and could study them for hours at a time, which I still do to this day. One of my biggest motivations later on for finishing my pilots license was to take him flying with me, so we could experience what we had talked about so long together. Unfortunately I never had that opportunity, but I know he is proud of me regardless.

Cecelia- Daily life excited him, and he never took life for granted. He found joy in the simplest of things, whether it be taking a walk in the neighborhood or enjoying a meal with family and friends. I remember whenever I would come to visit, he could not wait to hear me play piano. He would sit in the piano room and sing along to anything I would play. He would laugh, cry and critique my skills as I played. It was extremely therapeutic for the both of us, as we had a deep emotional connection to music and expression.

Aidan- My Nagypapa was an amazing scientist who shared his passion for it with everyone around him. Fortunately, I share that love for science, and always could connect over a good discussion about machines, biology, and more. I'd go on and on for hours, and those are the conversations I will always cherish. Throughout my entire life as a student, I've always looked forward to getting my report cards, knowing that I would be able to impress Nagypapa with my grades and comments in my science classes. As much as the praise from him felt great when I excelled in my classes, what means most to me is knowing that my passion will carry out his legacy. In addition to this, he always reminded me of the gifts I had and told me to never waste them. I know he is looking down on me, helping me be strong each and every day.

He believed in living life to the fullest and therefore his family celebrates his life daily. Our father was a fantastic role model. He believed in love and not hate. He believed that success should be measured in impact and happiness and not by how much money you have. He believed in diversity of thought, debate, and in always expanding your mind. He believed in all humans and valued them as equals. He believed in life and not death.

So people ask, why have we not had a funeral or some sort of ceremony? It's quite simple, our father is still alive through us and through all of the people he has impacted in his life. His legacy is to make the future better (the infinite game) and not the moment of time his life represented (the finite game).

Finally, he was interested in everything, learned about everything, and had a strong position on everything. He was an intellectual. He always taught us to invest in our minds all through our lives. After losing the family's worldly goods in World War II and then again during the Hungarian revolution, he told us "your mind is the only thing they can't take away." It was ironic to us that in the end, as that is what was taken away from him...his mind. But his legacy lives on.

You shaped us, you live within us and we will miss you forever.

Your beloved family.