



Ramjibhai Madhabhai Patel

May 30, 1939 - February 5, 2026

Ramjibhai (Ramji) M. Patel, PE, founder of Somat Engineering and respected leader in the Michigan engineering community, passed away peacefully at home in Chevy Chase, Maryland, on February 5, 2026, with his son and daughter at his side. He was 86.

Born on May 30, 1939, in Valam, Gujarat, India, Ramji came to the United States in 1970 at the age of 30 with a singular purpose: to further his education in civil engineering, secure opportunity, and build a future for his young family. He left behind his pregnant wife, Shardaben, whose earnings as a teacher in Mumbai helped finance his journey. Through determination, sacrifice, and faith in possibility, he established himself professionally so that he could bring her to America and raise their family here.

He earned his Bachelor's Degree in Civil Engineering from the Detroit Institute of Technology (now Lawrence Technological University) in 1971 and received his Professional Engineer (PE) license in 1977. After several successful years with Wade

Trim, he founded Somat Engineering in 1986, based in Detroit. Over a career spanning more than five decades, he was responsible for the design and construction oversight of projects totaling well over \$1 billion. He led Somat as Chairman, President, and CEO, later transitioning daily leadership while continuing to provide strategic guidance until his full retirement in 2024.

Ramji believed deeply in teamwork and cooperation, often saying, “One plus one may be two, but one beside one is eleven.” He also lived by the principle that “Honey will always get you farther than vinegar,” treating others with patience, dignity, and respect. He was disciplined in every aspect of life. He cared meticulously for his health, practicing yoga, meditation, pranayama breathing, and silent prayer for decades. A Hindu by faith, he was spiritual rather than ritualistic, guided by the teachings of the Bhagavad Gita and other sacred texts, which he lived quietly rather than preached publicly. Generous to friends and family, he did not hesitate to help when needed – whether through counsel, mentorship, or financial support. He led through action and example, not mere words. Many who knew him often remarked that they had never met anyone quite like him.

He remained intellectually curious throughout his life. After completing the Dale Carnegie Course early in his career, he continued seeking personal growth and self improvement. He avidly followed the stock market, managed his own investments, and read biographies of leaders he admired, including Lee Iacocca, Steve Jobs, Warren Buffett, and Indra Nooyi. He enjoyed Hollywood action and political intrigue films and maintained a lifelong habit of reading widely on health, spirituality, business, economics, and current events.

Ramji was a Gold Life Member of the NAACP and a contributor to the Mayor Coleman A. Young Foundation (CAYF), supporting educational opportunity and leadership development for Detroit's youth. He was also an active supporter of educational causes abroad. In addition to the CAYF, he supported the Foundation For Excellence, Chinmaya Vishwa Vidyapeeth University, primary schools in Gujarat, and established his own educational trust in India.

In his later years, he valued quiet reflection, spiritual practice, and, above all, the happiness and well-being of his children.

He was preceded in death by his beloved wife, Shardaben, who passed away

in 2016. He

is survived by his son, Mr. Arpan R. Patel of Chevy Chase, Maryland, and daughter, Ms.

Snehal R. Patel (Sné) of New York City, who carry forward his values of discipline, integrity, service, and perseverance.

Previous Events

Service w/ Cremation

FEB **15**. 1:00 PM (ET)

March Life Tribute Center, P.A. - Laurel
7601 Sandy Spring Road
Laurel, MD 20707
(301) 490-1550
<https://www.marchlifetributecenter.com>

Tribute Wall



“ *View and Download the Funeral Program*

March Life Tribute Centers - Laurel - February 11 at 04:28 PM



“ *March Life Tribute Centers - Laurel created a Webcast in memory of Ramjibhai Madhabhai Patel*



March Life Tribute Centers - Laurel - February 09 at 02:26 PM

RS

“ *I was saddened to hear of Ramji's passing. He was one of the kindest, caring persons I have ever known. He mentored me as a young engineer and helped me expand my opportunities for personal and professional growth. My life has been blessed in so many ways because of his influence. My sincere and heartfelt condolences to his wonderful family.*

Roger Safford - February 19 at 10:13 AM

HP

“ *Heena P. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Ramjibhai Madhabhai Patel.*

Heena P. - February 18 at 05:59 PM

LP

“ *Lisa Marie Prysock lit a candle in memory of Ramjibhai Madhabhai Patel*



Lisa Marie Prysock - February 17 at 10:00 AM

LP

“ *Ram was such a kind soul. Always had a smile and kind word to share.*

Lisa Marie Prysock

Lisa Marie Prysock - February 17 at 09:58 AM

BS

“ *Bharti & Jay Shah lit a candle in memory of Ramjibhai Madhabhai Patel*



Bharti & Jay Shah - February 12 at 08:17 PM

AP

“ **** *In lieu of flowers and gifts, PLEASE consider making a donation to the Foundation For Excellence (FFE) - an educational charity for India that Ramji held in the highest esteem:*

<https://ffe.org/donate-us/>

Thank you!

Best, Arpan and Snehal (Sné) Patel

Arpan Patel - February 11 at 04:58 PM